

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 1, 2009

Dr. James Balsiger  
Acting Assistant Administrator  
NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation, NOAA Fisheries Service  
1315 East West Highway, Rm 14853  
Silver Spring, MD 20910

**ATTN: Restoration Project Applications**

**Re:** Securing NOAA stimulus funding for "A Coordinated Approach to Tackle California's Marine Debris Footprint" project

Dear Dr. Balsiger,

We write in support of a competitive proposal submitted to you for funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act by the California Ocean Protection Council. The project proposal creates a coordinated effort among public and private agencies to tackle marine debris both on- and offshore in California. To tackle debris littering the coastline, organized "Clean Teams" will collect and inventory litter throughout the major urban watersheds of California. This dedicated effort will go a long way toward reducing litter that clogs our waterways and sullies our beaches and coastal areas. The litter that is collected will be recorded and entered into a centralized state database that will tell us what, where, and how much trash is accumulating and inform future decision-making regarding sustainable product design. To prevent marine debris, the project also proposes to work with coastal municipalities to install trash catchment devices in urban watersheds that will effectively reduce the amount of litter that is carried to sea. Altogether, the proposal would employ more than 150 people directly as well as create dozens of related manufacturing and service positions.

As Congressional representatives for California, we recognize that the health of California's coastal and marine environment is of utmost value and importance to the state and its citizens. The ocean and its resources have bestowed us with an appreciation of the ocean's ecological, recreational, and economic benefits, and require that we take the necessary steps to protect this essential environment.

One of the major problems plaguing the marine environment in California and globally is marine debris which harms wildlife and damages vital marine habitat. Many volunteers within California participate in the International Coastal Cleanup Day each September that has removed hundreds of thousands of cigarette butts, plastic bags, and cups, bottles and lids since it began several decades ago. Removal of trash and litter from our beaches and shoreline through annual volunteer

cleanup days is an important effort, but it will not solve the problem of marine debris which persists throughout the year.

Please consider funding this important step toward marine debris cleanup and prevention efforts in California.

Sincerely,

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
SAM FARR  
Member of Congress  
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PETE STARK  
Member of Congress

\_\_\_\_\_  
BARBARA LEE  
Member of Congress

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
JACKIE SPEIER  
Member of Congress

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MICHAEL M. HONDA  
Member of Congress

CC: Sam Schuchat, California State Coastal Conservancy